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SUBJECT: EMBASSY CAIRO SUBMISSION FOR SIXTH ANNUAL

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

REF: STATE 03836

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11. (SBU) This message responds to reftel. Embassy POC is poloff Roger Kenna, phone 20-2-797-2749, fax 20-2-797-2181, kennart2@state.gov. Poloff spent approximately 16 hours in the preparation of the TIP report. Conoff spent approximately 24 hours; ECPO Minister Counselor spent two hours; DCM spent two hours. The GOE does not have a POC for TIP. Information in this report was gleaned from bilateral meetings, other diplomatic contacts, and press reporting. The following input is keyed to the questions in reftel paras 21-24.

I. Overview

1A. Egypt is neither a country of origin or destination for a significant number of trafficking victims. However, an unknown number of trafficking victims probably transit Egypt en route to other destinations, notably Israel and Europe. There are currently no reliable estimates available in Egypt for the magnitude of the problem.

1B. The trafficking scenario most commonly cited involves young women from Eastern Europe arriving in Egypt by air, especially in the Red Sea resorts of Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada, who are then ferried overland across the border into Israel, where they are presumed to be forcibly employed in that country's sex industry. There were no documented cases of such trafficking in Egypt in 2005 by the GOE or by Egyptian media sources. A significant number of illegal migrants transit the Suez Canal en route to Europe. Some of these migrants could be trafficking victims. We are not aware of any surveys or research on the extent or nature of trafficking in Egypt. The Italian Embassy in Cairo reported that Italy is the destination for significant numbers of illegal migrant Egyptians who seek to cross the Mediterranean, often with the help of smugglers. Reliable contacts report that an unspecified number of voluntary Egyptian migrants to Italy become trafficking victims when they are unable to pay back loans extended to them by the smugglers.

1C. Embassy Cairo has repeatedly raised the issue of Trafficking in Persons with the Government of Egypt at both the Ministerial and working levels. In all of our discussions, GOE officials have expressed determination to fight the problem, to the extent that it exists in Egypt, and have sought from the U.S. any available information that could help identify extant trafficking networks inside the country. In January 2006, First Lady Suzanne Mubarak addressed an international meeting in Athens on TIP and said that her NGO, the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement (SMWIPM), is committed to fighting TIP of women and children. (Note: Post has contacted the SMWIPM to seek details on its plan of action and to seek possible cooperation. Post has shared anti-TIP information supplied by G/TIP with SMWIPM. End note.) The GOE devotes significant resources toward patrolling and policing its borders. Geography and resource limitations preclude total success. During a January 2005 visit, Embassy officials and visiting G/TIP staff met with Egyptian security officials in the Sinai who asserted that trafficking of Eastern European women, while never a major issue of concern for the Government, had been minimal in recent months. According to Israeli press reporting, based on "police data," 2005 witnessed a significant drop in the number of foreign women working as prostitutes in Israel, from 3000 in 2001 to "several hundred" in 2005. This development, if true, may in turn correlate to positive trends in the decrease of TIP via Egypt.

1D. There is no evidence to suggest involvement of any kind of either Governmental authorities or individual members of Government forces in facilitating or condoning trafficking. Due to lack of training and resource limitations, individual Government officials may not necessarily be equipped to

identify and prevent instances of trafficking. Egyptian law prohibits prostitution as well as the solicitation and facilitation of commercial sex. The "sale of child brides" has not been documented, per se, although the payment of dowries and marriage at relatively young ages are in keeping with cultural traditions. Girls marrying below the age of 18 require parental permission. Girls below the age of 16 may not marry. Infringements of these laws are thought to be common, particularly in rural areas.

II. Prevention

A-B. The Government acknowledges that some trafficking victims may transit Egypt. The Government reports that it is not currently aware of information that suggests a flow of such persons. Government agencies that would be involved in combating trafficking are the border police, immigration, and customs inspectors, overseen by State Security Investigations Service, and ultimately the Ministry of Interior. Officials responsible for consular affairs or tourism could also potentially become involved in responding to suspected trafficking cases.

C. There are currently no anti-trafficking information or education campaigns being conducted in Egypt. We are not aware of any Egyptian NGOs which systematically monitor or document trafficking in persons cases. Egyptian human rights and women's NGOs tell us they are not aware of a significant trafficking problem in Egypt.

D. The Government devotes significant resources to patrolling and policing its borders, particularly the Sinai desert border with Israel. The Government does not currently have a specific program to monitor migration and travel patterns for evidence of trafficking although it exerts robust efforts to combat illegal migration and alien smuggling. In particular, in the aftermath of the October 7, 2004 terror bombings in Sinai, which killed 34 people, the Government has made a concerted effort to increase security in Sinai, especially with regard to alleged illegal activities by the Sinai Bedouin tribes. Press reports note that the Government has engaged in a wide-ranging crackdown on suspected criminals in the Sinai. In addition, press reports in early 2005 detailed the Government's signing of a "pledge document" with tribal leaders, which committed the tribal leadership to reporting illegal activities, apparently including TIP. In February 2005, press reports noted that irregular Bedouin militia cooperated with Government security forces during a search for terrorism suspects, which led to a gun battle near Ras Sadr, which in turn left several terror suspects dead or captured.

E. Egyptian civil society is not focused on TIP. On human rights and related matters, Egyptian civil society has a sometimes contentious relationship with the GOE.

F. Anecdotal information supplied by GOE border security personnel suggests that the GOE does not have comprehensive program to monitor immigration/emigration for evidence of trafficking.

H-J. The Government has interagency working groups which coordinate on law enforcement issues, although none are specifically devoted to anti-TIP efforts. The Government has a special office for investigating and prosecuting public corruption cases. The Government prosecutes persons found to be involved in alien smuggling. Egyptian Government officials participate in international fora convened to combat TIP. There are no specific Government anti-TIP action plans or anti-trafficking programs.

III. Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers

A-C. Egyptian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons. However, other parts of the criminal code, such as laws against rape, abduction, prostitution, and forced labor, may be used to prosecute traffickers. Slavery is illegal. The maximum penalty for rape is life imprisonment. Egyptian Ministry of Justice officials told G/TIP and Embassy officials during a December 2004 meeting in Cairo that the Government is developing new legislation that will probably incorporate specific language on trafficking in persons. Embassy Cairo passed to the Ministry of Justice "legal building blocks" for anti-trafficking legislation developed by G/TIP. This legislation has not yet been presented to the Parliament for ratification.

D. Prostitution is illegal and the activities of prostitutes are criminalized.

E. In December 2003, an Egyptian court convicted Moataz Attiya Mohammad Hassan, a.k.a. Abu Qusay, of manslaughter and aiding illegal immigration for his role in the deaths of 353 persons trying to reach Australia when their boat sank. Abu

Qusay was sentenced to seven-years in prison, although the sentence was reduced on appeal to three years. In February 2005, a criminal court in South Sinai convicted Talal Soliman of attempting to smuggle 5 Russian (and/or Moldovan) women to Israel. Soliman was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison. According to press accounts, Sinai police in July 2003 had sought to detain Soliman when he was transporting the Eastern European women from south Sinai to Israel. Soliman opened fire on the police and wounded one of them before he was detained.

According to a Cairo-based Russian diplomatic source, in September 2002, three Moldovan women were abducted from a hotel in Sharm el-Sheikh by Bedouin who raped them and apparently tried to transport them to Israel. One of the victims escaped and informed Egyptian police, who successfully rescued the other two victims and arrested the perpetrators. According to the Russian, the perpetrators were eventually convicted and received 25-year sentences. The Russian diplomat said no trafficking cases have come to his attention since that time.

1F. Egyptian law enforcement contacts generally identify Sinai Bedouin as engaging in the smuggling of contraband, possibly including humans, from Egypt into Israel. In October 2004, an Associated Press story reported that a gun battle between Bedouin smugglers and police in September had left an unspecified number of policemen wounded and 13 people, mainly Eastern European women, in Egyptian police custody. Embassy Cairo officials were unable to confirm the details of the AP account with Egyptian police contacts.

G-H. The Government does not currently provide specialized training in how to recognize, investigate, or prosecute instances of trafficking. The Government advises that instances of trafficking rarely come to its attention, but has explicitly requested from the U.S. any information that could identify such instances in Egypt. The Government is not currently known to be involved in any international investigations of trafficking cases.

I-M. The Government is not known to have ever extradited persons charged with trafficking to face prosecution in other countries. However, in the Abu Qusay case, the Government requested the defendant's extradition from Indonesia, which was granted. There is no evidence of Government involvement in or tolerance for trafficking nor is there evidence of a child sex tourism problem.

1N. Egypt is a signatory of ILO convention 182 concerning prohibition of the worst forms of child labor. Egypt is also a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (with a reservation regarding adoption) ILO Convention 29, and ILO Convention 105. Egypt is also a signatory to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

IV. Protection and Assistance to Victims

A-I. The Government reports that its consular and immigration officials, at home and abroad, have been instructed to be on the alert for possible instances of illegal migration and fraudulent travel, which would include trafficking. However, the Government does not currently have any programs for victim assistance or specialized training for personnel in identifying trafficking victims. The Government does not currently make special provisions for victims' participation in prosecutions or for protection for victims as witnesses nor does it provide specialized training in TIP to government officials. There are currently no NGOs in Egypt focused on providing services to trafficking victims.

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